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ABSTRACT

The community college concept was heatedly debated in Wisconsin from the mid-1950s to the early 1970s. A number of study groups and governmental bodies endorsed the creation of community colleges. Although most states embraced the concept of the community college, however, Wisconsin's debate over whether to establish a statewide community college program became buried amidst partisan political battles, strong lobbying efforts on the part of the university community, and opposition on the part of a few state vocational education officials. Unlike the many states that have increased articulation between vocational and academic education, Wisconsin has always maintained a clear separation between vocational and liberal arts education and opted for two-year university and state college branch centers instead of a statewide community college system. Throughout the sixties, many of Wisconsin's educational policymakers voiced concerns about the added financial burden that a statewide community college system would impose and about the fact that community colleges should not infringe on the universities' turf by substituting for existing liberal arts programs in public institutions. The State Board of Vocational and Adult Education opposed the creation of a statewide community college network because it wanted to maintain a strong program of vocational and adult education as its primary function. The Kellett Commission on Education, which was appointed by the governor in 1969, dealt the final blow to the creation of a statewide community college system despite the fact that there was a great push by many in the state to create community colleges to increase postsecondary educational opportunities for the state's disadvantaged residents and increasing college-bound population. (MN)

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MILWAUKEE AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE MOVEMENT IN WISCONSIN: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT

The need for improved educational access and quality in postsecondary institutions is again a concern of policy-makers in Wisconsin. As we search for new solutions, we are well advised to revisit past educational reform efforts in the state. It may very well be that the problems of today are in part rooted in our failure to implement educational options identified for us in the past.

One of the options undermined by policy-makers in Wisconsin's past was the creation of a state-supported community college system. Proponents of this approach argued that community colleges would have ended Wisconsin's outmoded status distinctions between vocational-technical education and academic education; that greater access to postsecondary educational opportunities could be guaranteed to the economically disadvantaged; that better incentives could be offered to enrollees of these two-year institutions to continue their education, via credit-transfer programs, in four-year institutions; that the service mission of postsecondary institutions to local communities could be better met by comprehensive community colleges; and that better economies in educational spending could be achieved.

The community college concept was heatedly debated in the state from the mid-1950s to the early 1970s. A number of study groups and governmental bodies endorsed the creation of these two-year colleges. However, while the majority of the states embraced the concept and created these institutions, Wisconsin buried the idea amidst partisan political battles, the strong lobbying efforts of the university community, and the opposition of a few vocational education state officials.

This paper provides a brief historical overview of the community college debate in Wisconsin. It identifies the forces that shaped the dual postsecondary education system of the state and past proposals for postsecondary educational reform, which are worth revisiting, as we engage in educational change today.

This background paper was prepared by Tony Baez, Assistant to the District Director of the Milwaukee Area Technical College. October 1986.

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MILWAUKEE AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE MOVEMENT IN WISCONSIN: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

As higher educational reform is urged by the realization that our colleges and universities may not be providing adequate access to minority and disadvantaged students--and quality education to those already in the system--a careful review of past reform efforts is always healthy.

In Wisconsin, concerns for improved educational access and quality have recently revived interest in the need for community colleges or a variation thereof. The discussion in the state has been especially prompted by concerns for the education of minority and disadvantaged students and because of the admitted need for improved transfer opportunities for students in the vocational, technical, and adult education system (VTAE) and the University of Wisconsin.

Generally, two distinct proposals have been advanced: a modified transfer program between the VTAE and the UW System proposed by the latter which basically leaves intact previous arrangements and mission distinctions between the two systems;* and a proposal for the creation of baccalaureate degrees based on a two-plus-two approach where lower division liberal arts courses (and occupational/professional courses in selected fields of study) would be taught in all or selected VTAE districts with full transferability to a four-year college/university. This last proposal has been developed by Dr. Rus Slicker, District Director of the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), who has also suggested that two-year university Centers could be merged with the VTAE schools to create comprehensive community colleges.

The issues are reminiscent of an earlier scenario in the state--in the 1960s and early 1970s--when proponents of a community college system, strongly supported by local communities and many educators, were opposed by VTAE and UW system officials, and some sectors of organized labor in Wisconsin.

This paper presents a historical perspective, albeit brief, on the debate over the creation of community colleges in Wisconsin. Some background is also provided on the development of the community college movement in the country. It is hoped that a historical perspective on the need for community colleges may help to guide the current discussion for improved access opportunities, and an improved credit transfer system between the VTAE and university systems.

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*Board of Regents' Study Group on the Future of the UW System," Transfer of Undergraduate Credit Between the VTAE and UW System." (Resolution SG4.)

The Junior and Community College Movement in the United States

It has been argued that junior and community colleges evolved from the land-grant "people's" colleges created by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. These were institutions originally created to extend the meaning of higher education to the agricultural and mechanical sciences, and to make postsecondary education accessible to those who did not have easy access to the selective and elite colleges of the times. 1/

By the end of the nineteenth century, a series of junior colleges had been established in the midwest area, with an educational mission not too far removed from what we know as junior colleges today. Generally, these were two-year institutions which delivered a lower division college liberal arts curriculum. Although they evolved as extensions of high school programs, by early in this century the junior colleges were distinctively collegiate institutions well accepted within higher education circles. The Great Depression, World War II, and the G.I. Bill all contributed to the growth of junior colleges in the 1940s.

In 1947 President Truman's Commission on Higher Education for American Democracy provided the national statement of support for what it referred to as locally controlled "community colleges." The Commission argued that the country needed a network of locally controlled comprehensive institutions of higher learning accessible to those individuals who wished to pursue such learning but could not afford or qualify for entry into four-year institutions. It urged local, state, and national fiscal support for these colleges. 2/ A number of states followed the advice of the Commission. By early in the '60s, many had systems of state-supported comprehensive community colleges, in addition to four-year and graduate universities.

The new comprehensive community colleges were clearly differentiated from the junior colleges. The typical comprehensive community college generally included:

1. Courses in general education/liberal arts for students enrolled in a two-year associate degree program. Generally, credits accumulated in these programs were fully transferable as satisfying the lower division liberal arts requirements of four-year institutions. 3/ In some cases, course work in occupational training programs was also transferable.

2. Diploma, certificate, apprenticeship, associate degree, and other terminal programs in vocational-technical education, and in other occupational fields.

3. Adult education and other forms of basic skill remediation.

4. Continuing education courses and other lifelong learning opportunities.

5. Various types of student support services, such as basic skill and occupational assessment, guidance and counseling, tutoring, and other forms of academic support services.

6. Community outreach and other forms of community service programs.

7. Close articulation with the area public school districts, other educational institutions, the private sector, and business. 4/

As the popularity of community colleges increased, more states assumed greater responsibility for their financing, while allowing a high degree of local control over program offerings and community services.

Four-year institutions also recognized the need for these colleges, accepted them as partners in postsecondary education, and articulated transfer and basic skill remediation programs with them.

Vocational Education

Training in vocational education and the trades also received a great boost with the development of the land-grant colleges. By the end of the nineteenth century, a number of trade and vocational schools emerged in the midwest and rapidly spread across the nation, often as extensions of high school programs. Over the years, many of these would be combined with community colleges, while some became separate schools or institutes.

THE WISCONSIN EXPERIENCE

Wisconsin addressed concerns for expanded access to higher education quite differently than did other states. Since early on, the state was clearly committed to liberal arts education, but all under the umbrella of the University of Wisconsin and the two-year Normal Schools. In 1911 the Legislature authorized the Normal Schools to broaden their curriculum to improve transfer capabilities to the University of Wisconsin in Madison and to permit young people to begin their college careers nearer home and at less expense. 5/ Eventually, these schools became State Teachers Colleges and, in the 1950s, many became State Colleges.

Another movement for increased access to postsecondary education was launched by several strong vocational and manual education advocates.

As both groups--university and vocational advocates--competed for state financial support, a dual system of postsecondary education took shape and has prevailed into the present.

A review of vocational education developments and of the debate over the establishment of community colleges in the state can explain why Wisconsin has continued a dual system of postsecondary education. It can also shed light on some of the postsecondary reforms currently under discussion in the state.

Vocational Education in Wisconsin

In the late nineteenth century vocational and manual education advocates initiated programs in various parts of the state. Unlike in other states, these programs were to take an identity of their own, independent of other postsecondary institutions.

Most notable among vocational programs at the end of the nineteenth century was the Stout Manual Training Schools, an extension of the Menomonie Public Schools, first conceptualized and financially supported by lumbering industrialist James Huff Stout in 1889. The Stout school took from the earlier Missouri and Illinois schools, and espoused a "manual" training philosophy.

[It is important to note that "manual" training was not seen by its proponents as only vocational training. The leaders of the movement across the country and in Wisconsin made clear their intent that manual training be only supplementary to "the study of books." 6/ James Stout, for instance, was clear on the need for educational programs which integrated both manual/vocational training and general education, "so as to stimulate the mind." 7/]

In 1895 Stout was elected State Senator. Immediately after, he introduced a bill to "authorize and encourage the establishment of manual training departments in connection with the high schools of the state." 8/ Stout left his imprint on many of the postsecondary educational developments of the time, while serving as Chair of the Senate Education Committee and as a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin. With Stout, state support for manual training began to take shape.

Another key figure in the movement for state support of vocational education was Dr. Charles McCarthy. In 1901 he was appointed Legislative Reference Librarian. In this capacity he began to promote educational change in the state, first by suggesting the need for the University to reach out to neglected communities. Immediately after, his proposals were translated into the University Extension system. 9/

Dr. McCarthy also became concerned with the plight of the adolescents of the state who did not finished school, with adults in need of continuing and vocational training, and with the large numbers of unskilled immigrants in the state. In 1909 he joined forces with a number of legislators, and educators across the state, to propose legislation to address the educational needs of

these populations. A Legislative Committee was established to look into the issues, consisting of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the President of the University of Wisconsin, the Director of the Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin, the City Superintendent of Schools in Milwaukee, and Dr. McCarthy. 10/

Dr. McCarthy then travelled to Europe to assess the nature of educational training. Upon his return, he developed a bill which was introduced in 1911 in the State Senate by Senator Edward T. Fairchild of Milwaukee. This bill created the state's vocational and adult education schools; the State Board of Vocational and Adult Education (SBVAE); and local Boards of industrial education composed of two employers, two employees, and the City Superintendent of Schools. 11/

A year later, the Milwaukee Board of Industrial Education was created. One of its first actions was the creation of the Milwaukee Continuation School (later the Milwaukee Vocational and Adult Schools) under the leadership of Dr. Robert L. Cooley. 12/ The largest vocational undertaking of the state had begun, clearly separated from the university system, with both local and state support.

Immediately after, the Stout Institute went on to become a four-year degree state college, designated as such by legislation in 1913, for the purpose of training teachers of trade and industrial subjects. This, however, did not happened without some opposition by university leaders. President Charles R. Van Hise of the University of Wisconsin, for instance, felt compelled to speak against the creation of any other state-supported educational institution which could conceivably duplicate the University's mission of liberal arts offerings. 13/ Over his objections, the legislature approved the Stout proposal, with the understanding that liberal arts education was the mission of the University. In so doing, they also contributed to a rigid separation between vocational/technical education and liberal arts education in the state. To date, with few exceptions, the legislature has steered clear of any major involvement in the issue.

The Community College Debate in Wisconsin

Wisconsin, unlike other states, was not enthusiastic about joining the junior college movement. Although its educational leadership was highly involved in national educational reform groups, it failed to push for the creation of two-year liberal arts colleges. 14/ Rather, most of the leadership maintained the separation between liberal arts and vocational education, and opted for the creation of two-year university and state college branch centers.

When the Depression hit the State and increased the numbers of unemployed persons in need of retraining and postsecondary education, Milwaukee started, in 1934, a "vocational junior

college." 15/ The Milwaukee experiment appears to have been nothing more than a series of transferable course offerings accredited by the University of Wisconsin, under a 1936 agreement, which, to date, have not expanded beyond a small percentage of the courses offered in other areas of study. 16/

There was some discussion about the creation of a state-supported junior college system immediately after World War II. But nothing happened until the mid-1950s when a new debate over the future of higher education in the state and the establishment of a campus of the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee forced the state to take a closer look at the need for postsecondary educational reform. 17/ A Coordinating Committee for Higher Education (CCHE) was created by Chapter 619, Laws of 1955, to coordinate the activities of all state-supported institutions of higher education. The CCHE was authorized to make studies of higher educational issues; to report results and make recommendations to the governor and the legislature; to determine which academic programs would be offered at each institution; to ascertain building needs and develop priorities for construction; and to write and submit a single, consolidated biennial budget request for all the institutions. 18/ [The CCHE was later renamed the Coordinating Council for Higher Education in 1968, after some major reorganization of functions and staffing by the legislature.]

Initially, the CCHE's membership was composed of representatives of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, the Board of Regents of the Wisconsin State Colleges, and private citizens appointed by the Governor. The Committee was supported by a "Joint Staff" appointed by these institutions. Later, Chapter 56, Laws of 1961, added representatives from the County Teachers College Board, and Chapter 415, Laws of 1963, added representation from the State Board of Vocational and Adult Education.

The CCHE prolonged its existence until 1971, when Chapter 100, Laws of 1971, merged the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin State Colleges, and abolished the CCHE. During its existence, it had a major role in higher educational reform, and in researching and documenting proposals for educational change.

In 1955, the establishment of the Milwaukee campus of the University of Wisconsin, and the proliferation of state colleges, was still viewed by some sectors as insufficient to meet the postsecondary educational needs of the increasing college-age student population of the state. Immediately after its creation, the CCHE staff was asked to study the possibility of creating additional two-year junior or community colleges. The staff did extensive research and writing on the issue, and submitted numerous proposals for consideration by the Committee.

One group strongly supporting the creation of a network of junior colleges (both private and public) was the Wisconsin Association of Presidents and Deans of Liberal Arts Colleges. On

December 13, 1958, it created an Ad Hoc Committee on junior colleges. The following year, the Committee prepared reactions to the CCHE Joint Staff's reports on the matter, strongly endorsing in principle "the concept of the comprehensive junior college," if their creation would include a two-year liberal arts program designed to "prepare students to complete their degrees within four-year institutions," and "a satisfactory terminal program." In addition, the Ad Hoc group "strongly recommended the inclusion of Liberal Arts subjects in even the technical and sub-professional programs," and supported "the Joint Staff's conception that these institutions be collegiate in character rather than an extension of the local high school programs . . ." 19/

The issues raised in the early documentation (1958-1961) of both the CCHE and the aforementioned Ad Hoc Committee were to permeate the community college debate during the decade of the '60s. Succinctly, these included the following concerns:

1. That the establishment of two-year community colleges would add to the financial burden of local communities and could conceivably weaken the elementary and secondary school programs, by drawing from their funding base.

2. That the lower tuition rates of community colleges, as compared to other public or private institutions, could negatively affect enrollments in these institutions.

3. That community colleges should not substitute for existing liberal arts programs in public institutions, since that is the mission of the university.

4. That community colleges could be established only by merging vocational and adult schools with university extension centers, to avoid duplication of services and ensure efficiency in the use of facilities and staff.

An additional concern of the Ad Hoc Committee, and echoed by other liberal arts supporters, was the notion that, if established, junior/community colleges should discontinue their "subcollege level" programs. 20/ This statement was intended to ensure that junior or community colleges be fully collegiate in nature. Unfortunately, some vocational and adult education officials and advocates read into it the possibility of a weakening of the state's commitment to their programs.

The State Board of Vocational and Adult Education (SBVAE) joined the debate. In a number of its reports on the status of vocational education in the state, it too incorporated support for some type of community college system. However, while sympathetic to the extension of liberal arts offerings and a better transfer program, the Board emphasized its desire to maintain a strong program of vocational and adult education as its primary function.

In 1962, after almost two years of discussion on whether to invite the SBVAE to be a part of the decision-making in higher educational reform, the CCHE extended a membership invitation to the SBVAE. At its meeting of June 25, 1962, the SBVAE voted to accept membership under certain conditions. In a letter dated July 11, 1962, E. J. Fransway, President of the SBVAE, among other points, delineated the following:

"1. That the Coordinating Committee for Higher Education reaffirm its position that the vocational, technical, and adult education system in the state shall have the responsibility for the development and operation of post-high-school--terminal technical and vocational programs of the state including the related general education necessary thereto.

2. That the Coordinating Committee affirm the responsibility of the vocational, technical, and adult schools in the state for the development of two-year transfer general education programs in those areas where it is possible for them to do so effectively and where a need is established.

3. That the Coordinating Committee support substantially increased state financial participation for programs of the type listed in 1 and 2 above so that state aid for these programs will be comparable to that provided to other programs of higher education."

The SBVAE's letter was extensively discussed at the July 12, 1962, meeting of the CCHE and SBVAE's Liaison Committee. E. J. Fransway and C. L. Greiber (Director of the SBVAE) were both on hand to discuss the SBVAE's "conditions." After reiterating that the primary function of the SBVAE was vocational training, they indicated that it was their intent that liberal arts transfer programs be developed "only if local communities could justify the need in accord with SBVAE requirements and if CCHE approval were to be obtained."

Quite revealing was the intervention at this meeting of I. L. Baldwin, Vice-President of Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin and one of two co-directors of the Joint Staff. Speaking--allegedly--to get clarification for the University interests on the points raised by the SBVAE, he stressed, as paraphrased by the CCHE's minutes, that

> out of this meeting should come a clear understanding that the liberal arts transfer programs contemplated should be developed only in thickly populated urban communities in which units of the university or state colleges exist. Thus, liberal arts opportunities at the vocational and adult schools would be available in those urban areas to those wishing to mesh academic and vocational pursuits and to those fearful of or discouraged from attending units of the university or state colleges. 21/

Dr. Baldwin later went on to argue that liberal arts transfer opportunities outside the heavily populated urban areas should be provided by extension centers, or extension classes, of the university or state colleges. Baldwin and other UW supporters were suggesting that the extension centers operated in the form of junior colleges, and that vocational schools in heavily populated urban areas could be developed into comprehensive community colleges, because of the needed for expanded educational opportunities and cost considerations. A clearer distinction was being drawn between proposals for junior college types of institutions, and comprehensive community colleges.

For several years, the University's position was to dominate the documentation on community colleges prepared by the CCHE staff. Baldwin and other UW staff pushed the view that the political difficulties involved in a merger suggested that it was better to meet the educational need for transfer programs through better course articulation between the vocational schools and the university and state college systems. From 1962 to 1965 numerous papers were prepared by the CCHE staff which reviewed the national literature on the community college movement and discussed the educational and fiscal pros and cons of creating community colleges in the state. In direct opposition to the many merger proposals discussed at CCHE and CCHE Subcommittee meetings, the Joint Staff developed "alternative" proposals calling for the creation of new UW centers and state college branch campuses. Following the CCHE's advice the Legislature, in its 1963 session, authorized the establishment of two-year branch campuses and centers. By 1968 there were some 16 UW centers and state college branches.

All through this process the SBVAE representatives appear to have taken a passive role in the debate, albeit supporting the community college idea. During the mid-1960's only the Milwaukee and Madison vocational and technical schools were operating limited college parallel programs. But some other vocational schools in the state expressed great interest in expanding to a community college type. Several petitions were sent to the CCHE by these schools urging that they be allowed to convert to community colleges. 22/

Noteworthy is the fact that a stronger push for the creation of community colleges came from the Regents of the state college system represented in the CCHE. Regent John Thompson, a Stevens Point businessman, strongly opposed UW regents and their staff in their attempts to expand their system via more two-year centers and extension branches. He was joined by other members of the CCHE in requesting that the Joint Staff conduct "a full-scale study of post-high-school educational programs in Wisconsin with the thought in mind of developing community colleges." 23/

A major working paper was developed by the Joint Staff and submitted to CCHE's Subcommittee on Plans and Policies for discussion at its meeting of June 2, 1964. The paper, titled "An Analysis of Post-High-School Educational Opportunities at the

Community Level," 24/ was generally supportive of the UW position. It reviewed the literature for and against community colleges, and discussed the need for expanded postsecondary educational services, as a means to accommodate the growing population of college bound persons in the state; and it recommended that the CCHE should support the establishment of additional two-year university centers and branches, until the community college proposals were further studied and "a new organizational pattern be adopted and applied to future and existing institutions." 25/

At this meeting, Regents John Thompson and Duane Smith took strong exception to the Joint Staff's recommendation. Thompson's concerns were recorded in the minutes as follow:

> He believes a comprehensive community college has much greater possibilities of accommodating itself to the dynamics of the future. Mr. Thompson stressed the need for imaginative leadership in education. The difficulties of having a dual system which is strictly divided into these two sections will make it impossible for us to accommodate the future . . . He submits that we need to think of this problem, that if we find ourselves committed to a system which is dual we will have rigidity and what we need is flexibility. He thinks flexibility can come from the comprehensive community college. 26/

Regent Smith raised the possibility, as an alternative to the Joint Staff's plans, of "integrating the vocational schools, the branch campuses of the university, and/or the state colleges, and last but not least the 22 county colleges . . . into a system such as is found in other states." 27/

Also noteworthy was further discussion in the same meeting of the view that perhaps community colleges in Wisconsin should be modeled after the Milwaukee Institute of Technology. The widely held perception at the time was that Milwaukee operated much like a community college, and the issue was merely to recognize it as such. 28/

In a subsequent paper discussed in the December 10, 1964, meeting of the CCHE, the Joint Staff argued that

> Wisconsin has two clearly defined, well running programs which are in fact already engaged in extensive expansion to meet the needs of Wisconsin's young people. The sheer dynamics of public policy in terms of public acceptance, existing legislation, existing staffs, and existing plans mean that as a practical matter the current plans for centers, branch campuses, and the area technical vocational schools can be implemented and educational opportunities made available before a new organizational framework and planning can <u>begin</u> to provide such

> opportunities on a different footing. Administration, staff, facilities, and finances in most vocational and adult schools are not ready for new transfer programs. To delay new programs until new institutions or administrative organization develop would be a disservice to the citizens of Wisconsin. 29/

To counteract the strong push by UW staff for continuation and expansion of the two-year university centers, minority reports were filed with the CCHE by staff members appointed by the state college system. 30/ One of these minority reports called for the creation of a state-wide community college system to take over all UW centers, state university branches, and technical institutes by 1975. 31/

Late in 1964, the SBVAE acted to clarify their position on the issue. A resolution unanimously adopted by the Board at one of its regular meetings held in Milwaukee on December 21, 1964, stressed the SBVAE's commitment to expand lower division transfer programs in "a number of cities," and resolved that

> . . .the State Board of Vocational and Adult Education reaffirms its willingness to assume the responsibility for providing comprehensive community college offerings through the expansion of existing or the establishment of new institutions under its supervision. 32/

Two days later, Republican Governor Warren P. Knowles was also writing to the CCHE requesting clarification of its position on two-year centers and community colleges. 33/ In its response to the Governor, the CCHE staff agreed with the need for community colleges, but reiterated that they be allowed only functionally, mostly in separate facilities, via improved collaboration between the SBVAE, extension centers, and state college branches. 34/

The Kellett Commission on Education

Governor Knowles was not very pleased with the CCHE's responses. In fact, he was generally dissatisfied with the CCHE's support for the proliferation of duplicative and costly higher educational centers. This appears to have led to his decision to significantly reorganize and restructure the body in 1968. And, in 1969, he appointed a special commission to study and recommend changes in the structure and organization of public education in the state.

The new Governor's Commission on Education was headed by William R. Kellett, a retired industrialist from Neenah-Menasha, Wisconsin, who had previously headed another Knowles' Commission which reviewed state government structures. In his State of the State Message to the Wisconsin Legislature on January 23, 1969, Governor Knowles delineated the charge of the Commission:

> I proposed to create a Special Committee on Education to study in depth the State's financial and administrative relationships with education at all levels, including the mutual needs of the State and non-public schools. The Committee will undertake a comprehensive evaluation of Wisconsin educational systems and recommend appropriate actions to insure that the tremendous investment of tax dollars produces the maximum educational result. At the present time, 65 CENTS OUT OF EVERY WISCONSIN TAX DOLLAR (exclusive of capital investments) GOES TO EDUCATION. Furthermore, education costs are soaring higher and higher each year. As a result of the fiscal demand of education, the State's resources are virtually exhausted before other high priority public needs can be fulfilled. It is absolutely essential, therefore, that the full gamut of educational programs be objectively examined and that, based upon the Committee's findings, the necessary actions be taken to promote utilization of modern technology, improve educational results and increase efficiency wherever possible . . . 35/

The Kellett Commission--as it was popularly known--began immediate work on its charge. According to Kellett's own records, "more than 600 men and women and some 3,000 students saw fit to volunteer their services" 36/ in the effort. Several task forces were organized to review the various components of the educational systems in the state. By late 1969, most of the study groups had prepared extensive analyses and recommendations, which were then integrated into a preliminary report widely disseminated for public discussion in March 1970.

The Kellett Commission also dedicated much discussion to the creation of comprehensive community colleges. A review of selected Commission documentation, and of media coverage of its activities, reveals that initial community college proposals developed by several of the study groups attracted a storm of debate. A number of University and SBVAE officials and legislators voiced opposition to such recommendations, although for different reasons: University officials did not want to lose their two-year centers and were skeptical of the quality of liberal arts education which would be provided at vocational/technical schools; and some vocational school officials--especially Joseph Knoll, a Kenosha businessman who presided over the State Board of Vocational Education--argued that a merger of two-year centers and vocational schools would dilute the quality of vocational and technical training. 37/

Opposition notwithstanding, the study groups went ahead with their support for a community college system for the state. One group, the Study Committee on Education for Employment, chaired by Mr. Lloyd Besant, made the following recommendations in December of 1969:

1. That a statewide system of comprehensive area colleges should be established to meet the needs of the individual citizens and the manpower needs of the state.

2. That the system be composed of public post-high-school education facilities distributed as widely as possible throughout the state as is educationally sound and economically feasible.

The Committee believes that the major portion of the the liberal arts collegiate education program should be offered at the four-year institutions of higher education in Wisconsin. General education, which may be transferable, should be available to students in the comprehensive college system and should be designed to meet the needs of the students who will be served by the system.

Comprehensive post-high-school education should be available to all individuals as widely throughout the state as possible. It should include offerings in the following areas:

1. Adult education
2. Vocational education
3. Technical education
4. Liberal arts

The programs should be so designed that a student could take courses in various programs as his abilities indicate, not being needlessly forced into a lock-step curriculum.

In large urban communities, it is deemed advisable to offer programs in all four of the above areas. <u>To allay fears of liberal arts dominance, limitation of 25% of the full-time equivalent enrollment should be placed on liberal arts transfer programs.</u> These institutions should develop the general education courses necessary as part of the vocational-technical programs which are offered by the institution. 38/ (Emphasis added)

In support of their recommendation, the Study Committee argued that

. . . the clear requirement is for a public policy that provides for education in public post-high two-year comprehensive institutions available to all citizens as well as in the present four-year institutions.

In addition to listing what they thought were the educational advantages of such a system, they stated what they termed "administrative advantages":

1. Eliminates the necessity of having two or more administrative structures, staffs, and services by combining all two-year institutions into a comprehensive college system.

2. Eliminates the duplication of some of the physical plant resources.

3. Makes for better utilization of faculty.

As proposed by this Committee, the governing body of the proposed system would have to be "unique" and "sympathetic to the needs of business and industry as well as the special interests and concerns of students." 39/ It should also take the shape of a "state board which represents the citizens of the state. The board's composition would be determined by statute and the members appointed by the Governor with the approval of the Senate." 40/ And the Committee further recommended that educational service districts should be created with a local governing board which would be advisory to the state board. 41/

Both Mr. Kellett and Governor Knowles supported the Study Committee's recommendations on the creation of community colleges. As reported in the media, both were the object of numerous attacks for their stand, especially after the release in March 1970 of the preliminary report. The final report was published in November of 1970 under the title of A Forward Look: Final Report of the Governor's Commission on Education. 42/ Some Commission observers speculated that perhaps these attacks led to less direct and more carefully worded statements and recommendations on the community college issue in the final report. 43/ A few excerpts from the final report tend to substantiate the latter:

> *This (Wisconsin's) dual system of education, separating occupational education from academic education, has been a unique feature of Wisconsin's pattern of educational organization for more than fifty years. As a result, Wisconsin has some of the finest technical schools in the nation. Its university centers also provide quality academic programs. The proliferation of both types of institutions, however, is not justified in terms either of satisfactorily meeting the important needs of most Wisconsin youth, or of prudent managing of educational resources.
>
> *Our society must not retain outmoded status distinctions between technical and academic education.
>
> *Recommendation
>
> Create a system of state-financed technical colleges that will retain the functions and programs of the vocational-technical schools and expand opportunities for general studies relevant to career preparation.

*These colleges should be located to take advantage of present educational facilities and to provide convenient regional accessibility.

*The proposed colleges should have the same status and excellence in their field as other parts of the state's higher education system.

*Recommendation

The State Education Board should develop a plan for merging the facilities and resources, where feasible, of the vocational and technical schools with those of the university branch campuses and centers and determine the number and appropriate sites of the technical colleges.

*The Commission suggests that ten technical colleges, each offering comprehensive programs, be developed in locations reasonably accessible through carefully designed mergers and district realignment to students in all regions of the state.

To finance these proposals, the Commission went on to recommend that "an effort should be made to relieve the burden of local property taxes by financing technical education on the same basis as other state-supported higher education," shifting the costs of the proposed colleges from local property taxes to state revenues. 44/

There was much more to the Kellett Commission which antagonized the educational establishment in Wisconsin. Most controversial was a proposal to create a State Board of Education which would govern all public educational activity; a student-specific voucher system for higher education "whereby any qualified Wisconsin high school graduate may attend any non-profit, accredited school, college, or university--public or private-- . . .;" 45/ and proposals for greater property tax relief via the redesigning of educational financing systems.

Within vocational education circles, there was mixed reaction to the report. Some thought the recommendations were desirable but that they would cause renewed reorganization of a system that had just been reorganized in accordance with a 1965 redistricting bill. 46/ Others thought that the proposals would weaken local control of vocational-technical education. In Milwaukee, which has the largest vocational-technical college in the state, the reaction of the District Director, Dr. William L. Ramsey, was less than enthusiastic. Ramsey showed more concern for the failure of the Commission's report to highlight the accomplishments of his institution than for the proposals aimed at expanding credit-transferable liberal arts programs or the proposals for greater state financing of vocational-technical programs. 47/

The final blow to the Kellett proposals came with the November 1970 election of Democrat Patrick Lucey as Governor of the state. Lucey won in a landslide, carrying two-thirds of the State Assembly. Immediately after his election he announced the creation of his own Task Force on Education, suggesting that the Kellett report was no more than a partisan document inconsistent with the Democrats' plans for educational reform in the state. Governor Lucey further suggested that he would include Kellett in his Task Force, if he chose to participate. 48/

It soon became clear that the most immediate educational concern of the the new governor was the merger of the university and state college system. The CCHE had approved, as part of its ten-year academic plan for four-year institutions, a merger of the university system and the state colleges. This led to the merger bill of 1971. 49/ Governor Lucey signed the bill, and, in addition, abolished the CCHE, shifting its responsibilities to the new Board of Regents and the Wisconsin Board of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education.

Although the Commission's report was viewed by many as visionary and the single most comprehensive package of educational reforms ever recommended to state policy-makers, attempts by William Kellett to have his proposals taken "to the people" of the state were unsuccessful. Kellett even visited the new Governor asking for support but was told that more expert advice was needed before any of the major reforms could be considered. 50/

The university and state college merger overshadowed the Kellett report. Several legislative initiatives which followed its recommendations were not successful under the new State Assembly. No action was taken on the community college and vocational-technical college proposals. And by later in the decade few people remembered the Kellett Commission.

CONCLUSIONS

The idea of a community college system for the state died with the "filing" of the Kellett Commission report. The powerful educational lobby of the state--especially that of the University of Wisconsin--kept the issue from resurfacing at the legislature. No attempt at revisiting the issue ever came from vocational education officials.

The historical record shows that there was a great push by many in the state to create community colleges. These were viewed as having the potential for increasing postsecondary educational opportunities for the disadvantaged, as well as for the increasingly college-bound population of the state. This belief was also espoused by many across the country. The Carnagie Commission on Higher Education issued a major report in 1970 proposing that there be comprehensive community colleges within commuting distance of every potential student by 1980. The report noted that a major barrier to the development of community

colleges had been the existence of the competing types of two-year institutions and recommended that these institutions either broaden their programs or at least not stand in the way of the community college movement. 51/

As we approach the end of the '80s, concerns for equity in educational access and educational excellence are again suggesting a revisitation of the issues of the '60s, so extensively discussed by the Coordinating Council for Higher Education and the Kellett Commission.

A revisitation of the community college proposals made by the citizens and educators of Wisconsin at that time appear appropriate today.

NOTES

1. See, generally, Monroe, Charles R. Profile of the Community College (Chapter I,) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975; and, Vaughan, George B. Issues for Community College Leaders in a New Era (Introduction), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1983.

2. Ibid., Vaughan, George B., p. 6.

3. Ibid., Monroe, Charles R., pp. 59-60.

4. A 1965 article by Norman P. Mitby, Director of Madison Area Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education District, printed by a Wisconsin newspaper, extensively discussed the community college concept. Although the source of publication is unknown, a copy was secured directly from Mr. Mitby and acknowledgments are in order.

5. Klotsche, J. Martin. Confessions of an Educator: My Personal and Professional Memoirs. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1985.

6. Agnew, Dwight L. "A History of Stout State University (1893-1966.)" In History of the Wisconsin State Universities, Walker D. Wyman (ed.), River Falls, Wisconsin: State University Press, 1968.

7. Ibid., p. 236.

8. Ibid., p. 237.

9. Tarbell, Robert W. A History of the Milwaukee Vocational and Adult Schools From 1912-1958. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: MVAS Press, 1958.

10. Ibid., p. 16.

11. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

12. Ibid., p. 31.

13. Agnew, Dwight L., p. 253.

14. Agnew, D., R. W. Tarbell, Klotsche, and J. Martin (among others) have documented the involvement of Wisconsin educational leadership in national education reform.

15. Tarbell, Robert W., p. 203.

16. In 1985, enrollment in the college parallel program of the Milwaukee Area Technical College was less than 7 percent of the total enrollment (MATC Department of Research, Planning, and Development enrollment figures, 1985).

17. Klotsche, J. Martin. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee: An Urban University. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1972.

18. Kaufer, Nancy. "Inventory of the Records of the Coordinating Council for Higher Education (CCHE) 1956-1971; University of Wisconsin Archives in Madison (all references to the history of the CCHE were drawn from these documents).

19. CCHE minutes, April 22, 1960; Informational Item No. 29.

20. Ibid., p. 3.

21. CCHE No. 33, Subcommittee minutes, July 12, 1962; p. 2.

22. CCHE #60, Subcommittee minutes, June 2, 1964; CCHE paper No. 8, 1965; CCHE paper No. 2, 1965, Communication from Mr. Ruben A. Krause, Alderman, City Council; Antigo, Wisconsin, January 13, 1965; CCHE paper No. 86, 1964.

23. CCHE No. 60, Subcommittee minutes, June 2, 1964.

24. CCHE Working Paper No. 53, 1964.

25. Ibid.

26. CCHE No. 60, Subcommittee minutes, June 2, 1964.

27. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

28. In media coverage of the CCHE's community college debate, Milwaukee's program was often discussed as the prototype of the community college.

29. CCHE No. 86, Working Paper, 1964, p. 17.

30. Since early in the '60s, State College staff assigned to the CCHE had been voicing support for the creation of community colleges. However, University staff appeared to have been much more successful in pushing for the official UW position on the issue.

31. The Milwaukee Journal, December 12, 1965.

32. Wisconsin State Board of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education, Madison, Wisconsin, Minutes of December 21, 1964.

33. CCHE No. 8, Working Paper, February, 1965.

34. CCHE No. 4, 1965, "Planned Two-Year Educational Opportunities."

35. A Forward Look: Final Report of the Governor's Commission on Education, November, 1970.

36. Ibid.

37. The Milwaukee Journal, November 12, 1969.

38. Governor's Commission on Education's Study Committee on Education for Employment. Task Force Report, December, 1969; p. 23.

39. Ibid., pp. 14, 15.

40. Ibid., p. 25.

41. Ibid., p. 25.

42. A copy of the report is available through the State's Legislative Reference Bureau Library, Madison, Wisconsin 53702.

43. Green Bay Press Gazette, March 3, 1970. Wisconsin State Journal, May 1, 1970. Green Bay Press Gazette, November 25, 1970.

44. A Look Forward, pp. 22, 23.

45. Ibid., p. viii.

46. Wisconsin Statutes, Title IV, Chapter 41, 1967.

47. The Milwaukee Journal, January 25, 1971.

48. The Capital Times (Madison), January 11, 1971.

49. Klotsche, J. Martin. Confessions of an Educator

50. Green Bay Press Gazette, December 9, 1970.

51. As discussed in U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Report on Higher Education, March 1971. The Carnegie Commission report was titled The Open Door Colleges, and was published by McGraw-Hill, New York, 1970.